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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 MCT-01 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 OMB-01 DHA-05
/087 W
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R 010911Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5081
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4329

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PLO, LE, IS
SUBJECT: PLO ATTITUDE TOWARD SHTAURA AGREEMENT AND KFUR FRONT COMMUNIQUE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PLO HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS OVER LAST SEVERAL DAYS TO STRESS IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS PALESTINIAN READINESS TO IMPLEMENT PHASE III OF SHTAURA AGREEMENT, THUS SUGGESTING PLO REMAINS INTERESTED IN SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH LEBANON. AT SAME TIME, PLO HAS TAKEN STRONG EXCEPTION TO KFUR FRONT COMMUNIQUE THAT IN PART CALLS FOR EXPULSION OF PALESTINIANS. PLO PROBABLY SUSPECTS KFUR FRONT OF USING SHUF INCIDENTS AS PRETEXT TO TAKE UNCOMPROMISING STAND ON SOUTH, AND IS UNLIKELY TO ENDORSE ANY AGREEMENT CALLING FOR DEPARTURE FROM LEBANON OF LARGE NUMBERS OF PALESTINIANS. END SUMMARY

2. PLO HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS OVER LAST SEVERAL DAYS TO STRESS IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS PALESTINIAN READINESS TO IMPLEMENT PHASE III OF SHTAURA AGREEMENT. AS
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REPORTED BY PALESTINIAN NEWS AGENCY WAFA, FOR EXAMPLE:
-- PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL ON AUGUST 26 "STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOWING UP IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AND SHTAURA AGREE-MENT THROUGH COOPERATION WITH LEGITIMATE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AND ARAB FORCES";
-- ABU IYAD ON AUGUST 29 TOLD PLO CADRE "ABOUT WILLINGNESS OF PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION TO FULFILL ITS COMMITMENTS AS

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AGREED UPON RECENTLY IN SHTAURA . . . AS SOON AS POSSIBLE";
-- IN MEETING WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ABDEL HALIM
KHADDAM IN DAMASCUS ON AUGUST 29, PLO DELEGATION "AFFIRMED
THAT PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION HAS BEEN PREPARED TO EXECUTE
(SHTAURA) AGREEMENT SINCE ITS SIGNING" AND ALONG WITH
SYRIAN SIDE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR EFFORTS OF PRESI-
DENT TO SPEED UP IMLEMENTATION OF PHASE III.

3. AT SAME TIME, PLO HAS TAKEN STRONG EXCEPTION TO
AUGUST 27 KFUR FRONT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN WAKE OF RECENT
INCIDENTS IN SHUF (SEE BEIRUT 4262). PLO SHOWED PARTI-
CULAR SENSITIVITY TO KFUR FRONT DEMAND THAT PALESTINIANS
"BE DISTRIBUTED AMONG MEMBER NATIONS OF ARAB LEAGUE" TO
ENSURE PEACE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND REST OF COUNTRY.
AS REPORTED BY WAFA ON AUGUST 29, "OFFICIAL PALESTINIAN
INFORMATION SOURCE" SAID THAT "FRONT KNOWS WELL THAT
PALESTINIANS ARE NOT MERCHANDISE FOR DISTRIBUTION,
BUT - WHETHER FRONT ADMITS IT OR NOT - ARE MILITANTS
WHO KNOW HOW TO DEFEND THEIR EXISTENCE AND DIGNITY
WHEREVER THEY AREA." PALESTINIAN STATEMENT WENT ON
TO ACCUSE FRONT OF SERVING ISRAELI AND AMERICAN
RATHER THAN ARAB INTERESTS.

4. COMMENT: BY EMPHASIZING READINESS TO IMPLEMENT
SHTAURA AGREEMENT, PLO SUGGESTS IT BELIEVES PALES-
TINIAN INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED BY SOME SORT OF MODUS
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VIVENDI IN SOUTH THAT WOULD REDUCE LEVEL OF FIGHT-
ING AND LIKELIHOOD OF ISRAELI INCURSION. BY BREAKING
FROM NORMAL PRACTICE AND ISSUING FORMAL STATEMENT ON
KFUR FRONT COMMUNIQUE, PLO INDICATES IT IS VERY SUS-
PICIOUS THAT FRONT IS USING INCIDENTS IN SHUF AS PRE-
TEXT TO AVOID COMPROMISE WITH PLO IN SOUTH AND OTHER
AREAS. MOREOVER, BY SHOWING GREAT SENSITIVITY TO CALL
FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF PALESTINIANS, PLO IMPLIES IT
WOULD NOT ENDORSE ANY AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR
DEPARTURE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF PALESTINIANS FROM
LEBANON. END COMMENT.
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